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ABSTRACT

This paper specifies the assessment of those mechanics skills-handwriting, capitalization, punctuation, formats--that are needed for effective writing by students in grades one through six. An introductory section provides background materials, including explanations of how the skill specifications were selected and how they are presented in the report. Each skill is described in detail, followed by the presentation of sample assessment items and descriptions of how these items are constructed. (Four related documents provide assessment specifications for other writing skills, including spelling, language, general discourse, and discourse products.) (RL)

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SPECIFICATIONS FOR 1-6 WRITING SKILLS ASSESSMENT
PART I: MECHANICS

Ann Humes, Bruce Cronnell, Joseph Lawlor, Larry Gentry, Caroline Fieker

ABSTRACT

This paper specifies the assessment of those mechanics skills--handwriting, capitalization, punctuation, formats--that are needed for effective writing. (Other writing skills are specified for assessment in separate documents: Spelling, Language, General Discourse, and Discourse Products.) Each skill is described in detail; then sample assessment items are presented, followed by descriptions of how these items are constructed.

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SPECIFICATIONS FOR 1-6 WRITING SKILLS ASSESSMENTS
PART I: MECHANICS

Ann Humes, Bruce Cronnell, Joseph Lawlor, Larry Gentry, Caroline Fieker

A Language Skills Framework was provided for a project that had as its purpose the task of indicating language competencies in the English classroom, grades 1-6. These competencies are the criteria on which appropriate assessments can be based. One of the components of the framework is writing.

This paper describes the Mechanics skills of the framework, as well as the appropriate assessments for the skills. The paper includes Handwriting with the tradition mechanics skills because handwriting is the most mechanical of the discourse-construction skills. In the first section of this paper, the writing skills specifications are generally described as background. Then the specifications for the Handwriting skills and the Mechanics skills are presented.

BACKGROUND

To determine the essential writing skills, the literature was searched to identify skills that are proposed as significant by language arts authorities and by state and local competency lists. Data on the instruction in students' language arts textbooks were also analyzed for skills. A comprehensive list of skills was thus compiled and then revised to retain those skills most important for success in current school instructional programs. Thus these skills reflect writing instruction as it is, not necessary as it should be.

Grade levels were specified for these skills according to level of textbook presentation, and the skills were categorized by content into

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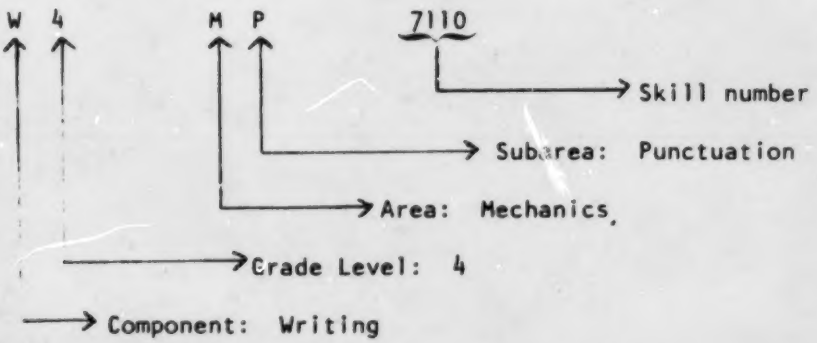
a framework of writing skills. For detailed discussion of these procedures, see Humes (1979).

After the skills were categorized, specifications for their assessment were developed. These detailed skills specifications provide suggested information to enable others to identify each skill or to develop appropriate assessment items. The skill specifications are primarily based on analyses of several textbook series currently used in elementary schools. This approach ensures a correspondence between assessment and instruction.

Skill specifications consist of a Code Number, a Skill Statement, a Skill Description, and an Assessment description that includes both Sample Items and an Item Description.

Code Numbers

The coding system was devised to allow rapid identification of each skill. The following example illustrates the system of individual skill numbers:



As is evident from the example above, the first symbol in a code is the letter "W," which indicates the component--Writing. The next symbol, a number, indicates the grade level. Following the grade level

are letters indicating the area (capital letters) and subarea (lower-case letters) of the skill. The specific skill is indicated by a four-digit code, hierarchically divided. The left digit defines a skill. This digit may be followed by three zeros or may contain digits describing the subordinate nature of the skill (e.g., skill 7100 is a subskill of 7000, and skill 7110 is subsumed under skill 7100).

In addition to the Mechanics covered by Part I, skills in other areas, which are sometimes referenced in Part I, are coded as follows:

Part II: Spelling--coded S

Part III: Language--coded L

Part IV: General Discourse--coded GD

Part V: Discourse Products--coded DP

Skill statements and Skill Descriptions

Each Skill Statement briefly specifies the coded skill, and the Skill Description notes factors involved in the use of each skill, including other inherent skills and prerequisite knowledge. Insofar as possible, the Skill Descriptions are written in non-technical language so that they may be understood by the general reader; however, some basic technical terminology is used to ensure accuracy in the descriptons.

Assessment Descriptions

The Assessment descriptions include Sample Items and Item Descriptions. For most skills, there are three or more sample items. These items reflect the actual requirements of each skill. Furthermore, the items are those most appropriate for the skill to be assessed. Constructed-response

items are frequently included since they are often the most appropriate means of assessing writing proficiency. Where appropriate, selected-response items are delineated. In some cases, these items are either more appropriate than or as appropriate as constructed-response items; in such cases, only the former are included.

Although selected-response items are easier to score than constructed-response items, they are frequently more exacting to prepare and may even be more difficult for students because of the amount of reading they entail. However, in some cases here is no way to lower the reading requirement and still assess the skill.

Special care is needed in the construction of distractor choices for selected-response items. Those used in the sample items and described in the Item Descriptions are carefully designed and written so that they can also be used for the diagnostic purposes discussed in the Item Descriptions. For additional information on writing appropriate assessment items and distractors, see Humes (forthcoming).

The distractor choices are also appropriate for the grade level of the skill being assessed. In the sample items, the correct choice is generally listed first for purposes of explication; however, in an actual assessment instrument, the answer choices would be randomly ordered.

Items should assess ability fairly; they should not trick students. Correspondingly, specific directions are painstakingly written for the items so that students can understand precisely what they are to do. Furthermore, examiners are expected to provide necessary assistance

during administration of the items so that students' understanding of a task is increased; however, examiners must also avoid giving clues to the answers. Another caution pertains to the items themselves: Most of the items (but not the item types) have never been used with students; therefore, they should be piloted at the specified grade levels.

A description of the item type accompanies each set of sample items. The Item Description details the exact procedures for completing each item, constructing additional similar items, and creating appropriate distractors. The description also notes any other important considerations relevant to assessing the skill with the sample-item format.

The vocabulary used in the sample items (including directions) is that documented for the Harris and Jacobson (1972) core vocabulary for reading from the preprimer level through grade 5. Since technical terms are generally not included in readers but are often needed for item directions, words are also used from the Harris and Jacobson content list for English (p. 106) and from the student terms in Cronnell (1979). In addition, since Harris and Jacobson eliminated proper nouns, a list of names was compiled, based on occurrence in at least two out of four commonly used elementary school reading programs. When other proper nouns are required for specific skills (e.g., capitalization), those used are ones considered most familiar to students.

Harris and Jacobson (1972) commonly strip words of various suffixes; therefore, unlisted forms of words are used according to the following grade-level schedule:

Grade 1: -s
Grade 2: -es, -ed, -ing (preferrably without spelling changes until grade 3); compounds of listed words
Grade 3: -er, -est, -ly, -y
Grade 4: contractions, possessives
Grade 5: un-

All of the previously mentioned word lists indicate the grade level at which the words can be read by most students. The words used in the sample items appear at earlier grade levels; e.g., grade 4 items are written in words appearing on the list no later than grade 3. This criterion helps ensure that reading ability does not interfere with writing performance.

Sometimes it is necessary--especially in directions--to use words not available at the grade level of the skill. Such words are identified in the assessment descriptions and should be read to the students. The limited vocabulary available for grade 1 precludes writing directions that use only words acceptable for that grade level; thus examiners should read all the directions to students in that grade level. (Reading directions for students may also be appropriate for grade 2.)

The sample items avoid language (connotative or denotative) and stereotypes that may offend individuals or groups. In particular, special attention has been given to avoiding sexism, racism, ageism, and other negative images, such as violence and excessively aggressive behavior.

In the sections that follow, Handwriting skills are discussed, a table listing the Handwriting skills is presented, and the specifications are described for each skill. The same presentation order is following for Mechanics--discussion of Mechanics, table of skills, and skill specifications.

HANDWRITING SKILLS

Handwriting covers the basic motor skills of writing essential for further progress in the composing process. Handwriting is sometimes taught as a separate subject with its own textbooks.

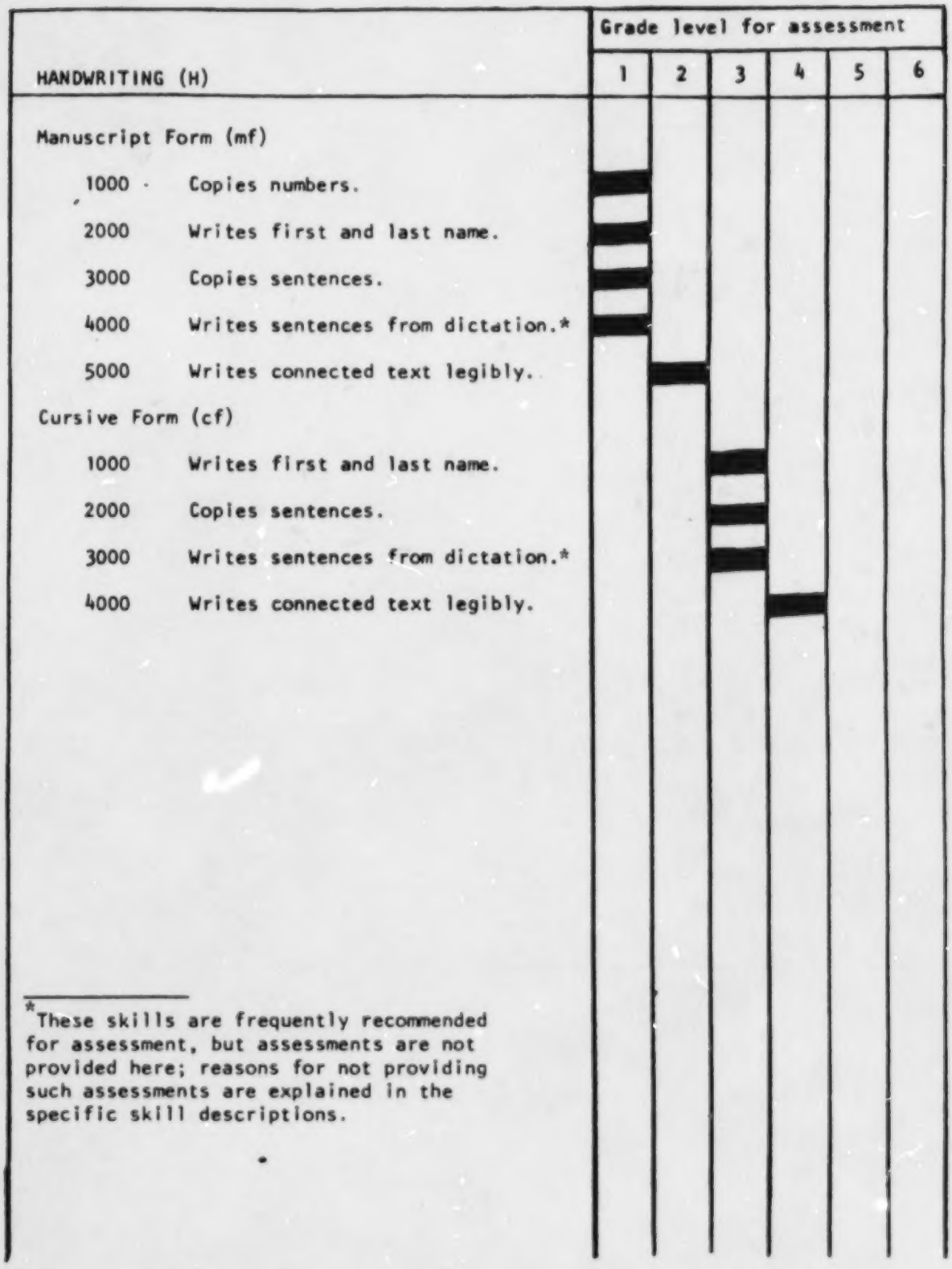
Skills for the handwriting category comprise two subareas, based on form:

> Manuscript Form: This subarea includes the skills of manuscript writing that are the basic handwriting skills generally required by all schools. Manuscript form is sometimes called "printing."
>
> Cursive Form: The skills of cursive (connected) writing are generally taught at higher grade levels after manuscript forms are mastered. Occasionally these skills are not taught at all; in such cases, cursive writing should not be assessed.

Although specifications for handwriting skills at grade 4 require only lined paper, assessment of handwriting skills at earlier levels requires specific guidelines;

> Grade 1: Lines one-inch high, with dotted lines in the center.
>
> Grade 2: Lines three-fourths-inch high, with dotted lines in the center.
>
> Grade 3: Lines one-half-inch high, with dotted lines in the center.

The following table lists all the skills included in this category.



*These skills are frequently recommended for assessment, but assessments are not provided here; reasons for not providing such assessments are explained in the specific skill descriptions.

Skill: Wl Hmf 1000

Skill Statement

Copies numbers.

Skill Description

The student copies the Arabic numerals 0-9 from samples printed on standard writing guidelines.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Copy the numbers.

1.

2.

3.

Comment: The words copy and number may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Wl Hmf 1000 (continued)

Item Description

The student copies a set of numerals on standard lined paper. The lines are extended beyond the number to allow space for copying.

Different texts, schools, and school districts use different number forms; the samples to be copied should be in the form that the student is expected to use. However, scoring should be flexible so that the precise sample form is not critical.

Student responses can be easily scored on a three-point scale:

A: good number formation
B: legible, but problems with number formation
C: illegible; very difficult to read

However, students should not be evaluated on the precision of their copy of the model; rather, the major criteria should be number formation and legibility.

Skill: Wl Hmf 2000

Skill Statement

Writes first and last name--manuscript form.

Skill Description

The student writes his or her first and last name in manuscript form when directed to do so. The names are written in order on standard writing guidelines.

Assessment

Sample Item

Directions: Print your first and last name.

_____

- -

_____

Comment: The words print, first, last, and name may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The student prints his or her name on standard lined paper.

Comment: Names should be written with initial capitals, but all capitals (and perhaps even all lower case) may be acceptable because this skill assesses handwriting, not capitalization. The acceptability of such responses is left to the discretion of the examiner.

Student responses can be scored on a three-point scale:

A: good letter formation
B: legible, but problems with letter formation
C: illegible; very difficult to read

Skill: Wl Hmf 3000

Skill State

Copies sentences--manuscript form.

Skill Description

The student copies sentences to demonstrate the ability to form and space letters and words in manuscript form. The skills of letter and word copying are not listed separately in the framework since they are subsumed under this skill. These lower-level skills are prerequisites to the skill being assessed here; if students are unable to perform this skill adequately, they other two skills can be assessed to diagnose students' needs.

Comment: The use of copying avoids the testing of language, spelling, and mechanics skills since the correct written form is presented in the model.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Write the sentences.

1. My father will paint the car.
   Do you have some good books?

2. We have a funny little dog.
   Is the car blue or red?
   She likes to play with me.

3. My goat can sit down.
   Do you have a red bike?
   It is fun to play.

Comment: The words write and sentence may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The student copies a set of sentences on standard lined paper. The stimulus sentences may be (1) in manuscript form on similar writing guidelines, (2) in manuscript form but of smaller size, either with or without guidelines, or (3) in standard typed or

WI Hmf 3000 (continued)

printed form (i.e., with serifs). The stimuli become more difficult from (1) to (3). Use of form (3) requires extra mental processing to convert from the printed form to the students' manuscript form; in fact, if students are not familiar with serifed type, (3) may be difficult to impossible for them.

The sentences contain all the letters of the alphabet except j, q, x, and z, which are not in the reading vocabulary being used. (If students are familiar with words with these letters, they may be used.) At least two sentences must be used to avoid copying long sentences; short sentences are easier to process. Multiple sentences also permit assessment of capital letters. One of the sentences is a question so that the question mark is also assessed.

Scoring

Student responses are scored on a three-point scale:

A: good letter and word formation and spacing.
B: legible, but problems with letter or word formation or spacing
C: illegible; very difficult to read

However, students should not be evaluated on the precision of their copy of the model; rather, the major rating criterion should be legibility.

Skill: Wl Hmf 4000

Skill Statement

Writes sentences from dictation--manuscript form.

Skill Description

The student writes in manuscript form a brief passage as it is dictated. The passage is broken into smaller segments (sentences, clauses, phrases, and words), and repeated several times to enable students to write it. The student's writing is evaluated on the accuracy of its reproduction of the dictated passage.

Comment: This skill is frequently used to practice and assess handwriting. However, it is actually a very complex language skill, requiring proficiency in many critical subskills. In fact, dictation is frequently used to assess overall general language ability among students for whom English is not the native language.

Dictation requires, first of all, oral comprehension ability. Ability to write from dictation may also be influenced by the student's hearing ability. It is additionally influenced by the dictator's speed, enunciation, and dialect. If the dictation is on tape, ability to write from dictation may also be influenced by the quality of the tape recording.

When writing from dictation, a student must use a variety of skills, including knowledge of phonology and grammatical structure, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and other mechanics, as well as handwriting. Thus writing from dictation is a complex task. Moreover, even though various sources suggest that dictation be given in grade 1, the subskills involved are frequently too complex to be assessed at such an early grade; e.g., students generally have minimal spelling and mechanics skills, so they would have great difficulty in writing accurately from dictation.

Writing from dictation is included here because it is a skill commonly found in textbooks, in authorities' skill lists, and in state competency lists. However, it is more of a language practice and/or assessment task than a practical writing task. (Stenographers, who actually take dictation in real life situations, require special skills beyond the scope of these specifications, and generally beyond the elementary level. When people write something presented orally, they usually take notes--a completely different skill.) Thus it is

WI Hmf 4000 (continued)

recommended that dictation not be assessed unless it is used as a measure of general oral and written language ability.

Skill: W2 Hmf 5000

Skill Statement

Writes connected text legibly--manuscript form.

Skill Description

The student demonstrates the ability to use manuscript form in her or his independent writing of extended text (two or more sentences). The writing is done on standard writing guidelines.

The writing should conform for size, shape, spacing, and alignment to the style that the student is expected to use. However, students should not be evaluated on how precisely their writing reflects the standard style; rather, the major criterion should be legibility.

This skill assesses only handwriting ability; it does not assess spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or language. If all of these are incorrect, but the handwriting itself is legible, the student should receive an acceptable evaluation.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by the writing sample for Skill W2 DPpr 2000

Skill: W3 Hcf 1000

Skill Statement

Writes first and last name--cursive form.

Skill Description

The student writes his or her first and last name in cursive form when directed to do so. The names are written in order on standard writing guidelines.

Assessment

Sample Item

Directions: Write your first and last name.

_____

- -

_____

Item Description

The student writes his or her first and last name on standard lined paper. Names should be written with initial capitals.

Student responses can be scored on a three-point scale:

A: good letter formation
B: legible, but problems with letter formation
C: illegible; very difficult to read

Skill: W3 Hcf 2000

Skill Statement

Copies sentences--cursive form.

Skill Description

The student copies sentences to demonstrate the ability to form and space letters and words in cursive form.. The skills of letter and word copying are not listed separately in the hierarchy since they are subsumed under this skill. These lower-level skills are prerequisites to the skill being assessed here; if students are unable to perform this skill adequately, the other two skills can be assessed to diagnose students' needs.

Comment: The use of copying avoids the testing of language, spelling, and mechanics skills since the correct written form is presented in the model.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Write the sentences.

1. It was a quiet day. Mary and Jack felt lazy. They did not have enough to do. What could they play next?

2. The lazy duck was trying to jump away from the bad fox. It said, "Quack. I have to run."

3. What is in the box? Maybe it is a quick dog or a lazy pig. I want to have it for a joke.

Comment: The word sentence may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The student copies a set of sentences on standard lined paper. The first word may be written for students in order to indicate that cursive rather than manuscript form is to be used. The stimulus sentences may be (1) in cursive form on similar writing guidelines, (2) in cursive form but of smaller size, either with or without guidelines, or (3) in standard typed or printed form.

Skill: W3 Hcf 3000

Skill Statement

Writes sentences from dictation--cursive form.

Skill Description

The student writes in cursive form a brief passage as it is dictated. The passage may be dictated "live" or on tape. The passage is broken into smaller segments (sentences, clauses, phrases, and words) and repeated several times to enable students to write it. The student writing is evaluated on the accuracy of its reproduction of the dictated passage.

Comment: This skill is frequently used to practice and assess handwriting. However, it is actually a very complex language skill, requiring proficiency in many critical subskills. In fact, dictation is frequently used to assess overall general language ability among students for whom English is not the native language.

Dictation requires, first of all, oral comprehension ability. Ability to write from dictation may also be influenced by the student's hearing ability. It is additionally influenced by the dictator's speed, enunciation, and dialect. If the dictation is on tape, ability to write from dictation may also be influenced by the quality of the tape recording.

When writing from dictation, a student must use a variety of skills, including knowledge of phonology and grammatical structure, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and other mechanics, as well as handwriting. Thus, writing from dictation is a complex task.

Writing from dictation is included here because it is a skill commonly found in textbooks, in authorities' skill lists, and in state competency lists. However, it is more of a language practice and/or assessment task than a practical writing task. (Stenographers, who actually take dictation in real life situations, require special skills beyond the scope of these specifications, and generally beyond the elementary level. When people write something presented orally, they usually take notes--a completely different skill.) Thus, it is recommended that dictation not be assessed unless it is used as a measure of general oral and written language ability.

Skill: W4 Hcf 4000

Skill Statement

Writes connected text legibly--cursive form.

Skill Description

The student demonstrates the ability to use cursive form in his or her independent writing of extended text (two or more sentences).

The writing should conform for size, shape, spacing, slant, and alignment to the style that the student is expected to use. However, students should not be evaluated on how precisely their writing reflects the standard style; rather, the major criterion should be legibility.

This skill assesses only handwriting ability; it does not assess spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or language. All of these may be incorrect, but if the handwriting itself is legible, the student should receive an acceptable evaluation on this skill.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by the writing samples for Skills W4 DPpr 3000 and W4 DPpr 4000.

MECHANICS SKILLS

This category of skills includes various skills for using graphic devices that are conventionally required to make written products more readable. Considerable textbook instruction is devoted to mechanics, perhaps because this area is relatively straightforward to teach and to test.

To facilitate assessment, some mechanics skills have been combined for assessment within and across subareas. The Mechanics category consists of three subareas:

Capitalization. This subarea includes the skills relevant to specific English-language rules for the capitalization of words. These rules prescribe the marking of sentence beginnings and other sentence segments, and the marking of certain classes of words.

Punctuation. Specific English-language rules for the use of various punctuation marks to set off words and groups of words and to form certain words are covered by the skills listed for this subarea. Assessment items for these skills frequently include none of these as an answer choice because there are few distractors available. Whenever none of these is used as an answer choice, it should be the correct response for at least one item in the assessment. Therefore, appropriate "none-of-these" items are provided. However, these items may be confusing to students, so they should be used judiciously.

Format Skills. A number of Mechanics skills that relate to the general form of a writing product are categorized here. Some

format skills are required to produce all writing products; e.g., margins, paragraph indentation. Other format skills are used only for specific types of writing, especially for the writing of letters. In fact, letters are primarily defined by their format rather than by their content (although good content is essential to effective letter writing); thus letters comprise a special class of written products.

The following table lists all the skills included in this skill category.

MECHANICS (M)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Capitalization (c)						
1000 Capitalizes names of persons and the personal pronoun I.		■				
2000 Capitalizes first word of sentence.		■				
3000 Capitalizes months, days, streets, cities, states, special days or holidays, countries, non-personal proper names.			■			
4000 Capitalizes greeting and complimentary closing of a letter.			■			
5000 Capitalizes first letter in personal titles: Mr., Miss, Mrs., Ms., Dr.			■			
6000 Capitalizes initials in names of persons, and abbreviations for days, months, and streets.				■		
7000 Capitalizes first word in dialogue quotations.				■		
Punctuation (p)						
1000 Uses period to end a sentence:						
1100 declarative.		■				
1200 imperative.				■		
2000 Uses question mark to end an interrogative sentence.		■				
3000 Uses exclamation point to end an exclamatory sentence.				■		
4000 Uses comma:						
4100 when writing the date*				■		
4200 between city and state.*				■		

*Although the asterisked punctuation skills are relevant to personal letter, they are taught later than letters; thus they are not included in the letter-writing assessment for third grade (Skill W3 DPpr 6000).

MECHANICS (continued)	Grade level for assessment					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
4300 to separate items in a series.						
4400 with direct address.						
5000 Uses periods at the end of abbreviations and initials.						
6000 Punctuates greeting and complimentary closing of a letter:						
6100 personal.						
6200 business.						
7000 Uses apostrophe:						
7100 in possessive forms:						
7110 singular.						
7120 plural.						
7200 in contractions.						
8000 Uses comma, terminal punctuation, and quotation marks in dialogue quotations.						
Format Skills (fs)						
1000 Indents first word of a paragraph.						
2000 Uses margins.						
3000 Fills in blanks of forms with personal information (e.g., name, birthday): heading of standardized test.						
4000 Includes the parts of a letter:						
4100 personal letter.						
4200 business letter						
5000 Places letter parts correctly:						
5100 personal letter.						
5200 business letter.						

MECHANICS (continued)		Grade level for assessment					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
6000	Includes all elements of address and return address on an envelope.			■			
7000	Places address and return address in the correct space on an envelope.			■			
8000	Uses dialogue for only one speaker in a paragraph.					■	

Skill: W2 Mc 1000

Skill Statement

Capitalizes names of persons and the personal pronoun I.

Skill Description

The student uses a capital letter to begin a personal name (including surname) and to form the personal pronoun I. Knowledge of the technical terms proper name and personal pronoun is not prerequisite to this skill.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which word should begin with a capital letter?

1. She saw pete at the zoo.
   A B C

2. Bill brown gave his kitten away.
   A B C

3. Tomorrow i will paint a picture.
   A B C

Comment: The words begin and capital may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The student selects the one word in the sentence that requires capitalization. The word to be capitalized should not be the first word in the sentence because capitalization of sentence beginnings is treated as a separate skill in the LSF (see W2 Mc 2000).

The sample items represent three types of words that should be considered in assessing this skill. Item 1 requires capitalization of a personal first name (Pete); item 2 requires capitalization of a surname (Brown); item 3 requires capitalization of the personal pronoun I. Surnames are always preceded by a first name or title.

Comment: Common nouns and adjectives that are within the grade-level reading vocabulary should be used as surnames in these items (e.g., brown becomes Bob Brown; hill becomes Mr. Hill).

W2 Mc 1000 (continued)

Two distractors are appropriate at this level. Distractors are other nouns and verbs in the sentence. Determiners and other function words are usually attractive as distractors only when the correspondingly short word I is the correct answer.

Skill: W2 Mc 2000

Skill Statement

Capitalizes first word of sentence.

Skill Description

The student uses a capital letter to begin the initial word in a sentence. The term sentence should be interpreted rather loosely in this context because students at this grade level are often not capable of composing or identifying grammatically complete sentences. Nevertheless, students should be expected to capitalize the first word of those phrases or clauses which they interpret to be sentences; e.g.:

> My dog likes to play with his favorite toy. A ball with a little bell in it.

However, fragments should not be used as assessment items.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which word should begin with a capital letter?

1. my birthday is tomorrow.
   A B C

2. the horse worked on a farm.
   A B C

3. fish live in the water.
   A B C

> Comment: The words begin and capital may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The stimulus is a sentence with the first word uncapitalized. Three choices for capitalization are given at this grade level. The student selects the initial word as the one word in the sentence requiring capitalization. Distractors are other words in the sentence.

> Comment: These items have an inherent problem in that the correct response is always choice A. Students who recognize this pattern could conceivably respond without ever reading the items. This problem can be alleviated by combining these items with the items for Skill W2 Mc 1000, "Capitalizes names of persons and the personal pronoun I" in the assessment instrument; e.g.:

W2 Mc 2000 (continued)

1. She saw pete at the zoo.
   A B C

2. my birthday is tomorrow.
   A B C

3. Bill brown gave his kitten away.
   A B C

Furthermore, capitalization of the first word of sentences is assessed by the writing sample for this grade level (see Skill W2 DPpr 2000).

Skill: W3 Mc 3000

Skill Statement

Capitalizes months, days, streets, cities, states, special days or holidays, countries, non-personal proper names.

Skill Description

The student capitalizes words from the following categories:

Category	Examples
1. Months of the year.	April, December
2. Days of the week.	Tuesday, Saturday
3. Streets.	Main Street, Oak Road
4. Cities.	Dallas, New York
5. States.	Iowa, New Hampshire
6. Special days or holidays.	Thanksgiving, Memorial Day
7. Countries, nationalities, and proper adjectives derived from countries.	Germany, Germans, German beer
8. Non-personal proper names:	
a. Geographical names.	Mount Everest, Lake Erie, Central Park
b. Names of companies, institutions, and clubs.	Ford Motor Company, Boy Scouts, Art Club
c. Names of buildings and other architectural structures.	Wilson Elementary School, Washington Monument, Golden Gate Bridge

Comment: One important category of proper names is not recommended for assessment at this grade level: Historical events and documents (e.g., Civil War, Magna Carta) are usually not included in instruction in elementary textbook series.

W3 Mc 3000 (continued)

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which word with a letter under it should begin with a capital letter?

1. My birthday is early in october.
   A B C D

2. Please come to my party on saturday morning.
   A B C D

3. Our house is farther down hill street.
   A B C D

4. My new school is on Oak street.
   A B C D

5. Many people live in the city of stonewall.
   A B C D

6. Margie and her family are moving to the state of texas.
   A B C D

7. The Brown family had a big dinner on thanksgiving Day.
   A B C D

8. My friend visited england on her trip.
   A B C D

9. Bear lake is a good place for a picnic.
   A B C D

10. Fran's new car is a green ford.
    A B C D

11. Our class saw a play at Black Mountain High school.
    A B C D

Directions: One word in this sentence needs a capital letter. Write the word, with a capital letter, on the line under the sentence.

12. My birthday is early in october.

[October]

W3 Mc 3000 (continued)

Comment: The words capital and state may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level. In addition, many of the proper names used in these items (e.g., October, Ford) may also not be in their reading vocabularies.

Item Description

The stimulus for these items is a sentence with one word requiring capitalization. In items 1-11, the student selects the word to be capitalized from three distractors in the sentence. As much as possible, distractors should be "major words" (nouns, verbs) because they require more discrimination in answer selection.

The word to be capitalized should not be the first word in the sentence because capitalization of sentence beginnings is assessed as a separate skill (see Skill W2 Mc 2000). Furthermore, abbreviations for months, days, streets, and states should not be used. These are also assessed elsewhere (see Skill W4 Mc 5000).

The following are comments regarding the appropriate content for assessment:

1. Months. Any months may be chosen for assessment. Since the names of months should be familiar to students, these words need not necessary be identified in the stimulus (e.g., My birthday is in the month of October).

2. Days. Any day of the week may be chosen for assessment.

3. Streets. There are two options available for assessing capitalization of streets: (1) capitalization of the name of the street (see item 3); (2) capitalization of Street, Road, or Drive following the name (see item 4).

   Street names should be words that are within the student's reading vocabulary (e.g., Oak/Mountain). The words street, road, and drive are acceptable and may be used in the assessment, although drive may be less familiar in this context. Avenue should be avoided since it may not be within the reading vocabulary.

4. Cities. Names of cities can be developed from common nouns and adjectives that are within the student's reading vocabulary (e.g., Stonewall). In addition, the student's home city or town should be considered for inclusion since

W3 Mc 3000 (continued)

it is likely to be the most familiar city name. The name of the city should be clearly identified in the sentence (e.g., city of Stonewall, or Stonewall City). The words town and city are acceptable at this grade level, but the word village should not be used.

5. States. Since state names may not be within the student's reading vocabulary, the word state should be included in the stimulus as a clue (see item 6). However, state should not be used as a distractor. State names used in the assessment should be relatively short and easy to read. For example, Texas is appropriate, but Minnesota is not. Furthermore, the student's home state should be considered for inclusion since it is probably the most familiar state name.

6. Special days or holidays. Although the names of holidays may not be within the student's reading vocabulary, most students should be familiar with national holidays. In addition, the stimulus can incorporate clues by referring to the traditional activities usually performed on these holidays (e.g., "a big dinner on Thanksgiving Day," or "fireworks on Independence Day").

7. Countries. To ensure that countries selected for assessment are familiar to students, examiners may wish to choose names that have been previously introduced to students in other school subject areas, such as geography, history, or reading. In addition, United States of America or America can be used with reasonable certainty that students have been exposed to these words.

8. Non-personal proper names. The names of local landmarks, institutions, and/or buildings can be selected for assessment so that students will recognize them as specific proper names.

Item 12 provides an example of a constructed-response adaptation of the selected-response items. The student identifies the word to be capitalized and rewrites it correctly below the stimulus. Students can be directed to rewrite the entire sentence, but this requires extensive copying, which is time-consuming and of little value for assessing this skill.

Skill: W3 Mc 4000

Skill Statement

Capitalizes greeting and complimentary closing of a letter.

Skill Description

The student capitalizes the word Dear in the greeting of a personal letter. The student also capitalizes the first word in the complimentary closing of a letter.

Comment: Capitalization of the personal name following Dear in the greeting of a letter is not considered in the assessment of this skill. Capitalization of personal names and titles is covered by separate skills in the framework (see Skill W2 Mc 1000 and Skill W3 Mc 5000).

Assessment

Comment: To facilitate assessment, capitalization of letter greetings and closings is combined with the related punctuation skill (see Skill W3 Mp 6100).

Skill: W3 Mc 5000

Skill Statement

Capitalizes first letter in personal titles: Mr., Miss, Mrs., Ms., Dr.

Skill Description

The student uses a capital letter to begin the personal title Miss and the abbreviated personal titles Mr., Mrs., Ms., and Dr. Recognition of the abbreviations as personal titles is prerequisite to this skill.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which word with a letter under it should begin with a capital letter?

1. You should see dr. Bridges if you have a cold.
   A B C D

2. I thanked (miss/mr./mrs./ms) Singer for coming
   A B C
   to our party.
   D

3. I went to the picnic with (miss/mr./mrs./ms.) White.
   A B C D

Directions: One word in this sentence needs a capital letter. Write the word, with a capital letter, on the line under the sentence.

4. You should see dr. Bridges if you have a cold.

   [Dr.] _____

Item Description

The stimulus for these items is a sentence containing a capitalized initial word, an uncapitalized personal title, and a capitalized surname following the title. In items 1-3 the student selects the personal title from three distractors in the sentence.

The position of the personal title is important in these items. The title should not be the first word of the sentence, since capitalization of the first word of a sentence is assessed as a separate skill in the LSF. Furthermore, the position of the title should be varied so that a consistent sentence position is not a clue to the correct response.

W3 Mc 5000 (continued)

Last names should be common nouns and adjectives that are within the student's reading vocabulary at this grade level (e.g., white becomes Mrs. White).

Item 4 is a constructed-response adaptation of the selected-response items. The student identifies and capitalizes the personal title. Students can be directed to rewrite the entire sentence, but this requires extensive copying, which is of little value for assessing this skill.

Skill: W4 Mc 6000

Skill Statement

Capitalizes initials in names of persons, and abbreviations for days, months, and streets.

Skill Description

The student capitalizes initials in personal names. The initials may represent the first and/or middle name (e.g., Jane T. Farmer; T. S. Eliot). The student also capitalizes the first letter in the abbreviations for days of the week (e.g., Mon.), months (e.g., Feb.), and streets (e.g., Main St.; Valley Rd.).

Recognition and understanding of initials and abbreviations is implicit in this skill.

Comment: Abbreviations for streets should be limited to St., Rd., and Dr. Other common street abbreviations, such as Ave. and Blvd., may be unfamiliar to students at this grade level.

Assessment

Comment: To facilitate assessment, this skill is combined with Skill W4 Mp 5000: Uses periods at the end of abbreviations and initials.

Skill: W4 Mc 7000

Skill Statement

Capitalizes first word in dialogue quotations.

Skill Description

The student uses a capital letter to begin the initial word in a dialogue quotation. Implicit in this skill is the ability to distinguish a dialogue quotation (enclosed in quotation marks) from the rest of the sentence.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which word with a letter under it should begin with a capital letter?

1. Annie asked, "which hammer is yours?"
   A B C D

2. Greg said, "thank you for coming to our party."
   A B C D

3. Sandy cried loudly, "we are trapped!"
   A B C D

Directions: One word in this sentence needs to be capitalized. Write the word, with a capital letter, on the line under the sentence.

4. Annie asked, "which hammer is yours?"

   [Which] _____

Item Description

The stimulus for these items is a sentence containing a dialogue quotation, the first word of which requires capitalization. In items 1-3, the student selects the first word of the quotation from three distractors in the sentence. Item 4 is the constructed-response adaptation of the selected-response items. The student identifies and capitalizes the first word of the dialogue quotation. The constructed-response format is the preferred assessment for this skill.

The initial word in the quotation should not be a proper noun, personal title, or the personal pronoun I. Also, the first word of the dialogue should not be the first word of the complete sentence. Capitalization of these words is assessed by separate skills in the LSF.

A variety of sentence types (declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory) may be used in the assessment.

Skill: W2 Mp 1100

Skill Statement

Uses period to end a declarative sentence.

Skill Description

Recognizing the need for terminal punctuation, the student uses a period to end a declarative sentence (which may be known to the student as a "statement," "telling sentence" or simply as a sentence, as distinguished from questions or "asking sentences").

Since all declarative sentences must end with a period, the period usually defines a declarative (or imperative) sentence.

Comment: A declarative sentence can generally be changed to an interrogative or exclamatory sentence by the use of a question mark or an exclamation mark, respectively; e.g.:

Declarative:	This food tastes good.
Interrogative:	This food tastes good?
Exclamatory:	This food tastes good!

In speech, these sentences would be differentiated on the basis of intonation and stress.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is also evaluated by the Writing Sample for this grade level, Skill W2 DPpr 2000.

Sample Items

Directions: Which mark goes in the blank?

1. The dog ran after the cat ____

   A. .
   B. ,
   C. no mark

2. Pat has many friends ____

   A. .
   B. ,
   C. no mark

3. I ____ like cake.

   A. .
   B. ,
   C. no mark

W2 Mp 1100 (continued)

Comment: The words mark, none, and blank may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The stimulus for items 1 and 2 is a declarative sentence with a blank replacing the terminal period. Answer distractors are (B) a comma and (C) "no mark."

Appropriate constructed-response items are difficult to write, particularly out of context, because the student can give a different interpretation to the sentence meaning. Thus a different punctuation mark can be used, one that is correct for the student's interpretation.

For the reasons explained above, a question mark or an exclamation mark cannot be used as a distractor because neither would be wrong. Other punctuation marks--e.g., semicolon or colon--are not used because they are generally not familiar to students at this grade level.

Whenever "no mark" is used as an answer choice, it should be the correct answer for at least one item in the assessment. Item 3 provides such an example. (Moreover, the comma should also be the correct answer to one item, but assessment of this skill is inappropriate for this grade level.)

Skill: W4 Mp 1200

Skill Statement

Uses period to end an imperative sentence.

Skill Description

Recognizing the need for terminal punctuation, the student places a period at the end of an imperative sentence (which may be known to the student as a "command" or "request" sentence).

Comment: For further explanation of imperative sentences, see Skill W4 Lgk 1300: Identifies sentence type: imperative.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which mark goes in the blank?

1. Put your books away__

   A. .
   B. ,
   C. none of these marks

2. Please pass me the butter__

   A. .
   B. ,
   C. none of these marks

3. Write your name on the paper__

   A. .
   B. ,
   C. none of these marks

4. Don't play__in the street.

   A. .
   B. ,
   C. none of these marks

W4 Mp 1200 (continued)

Comment: The word blank may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The stimuli for items 1-3 are imperative sentences with blanks replacing the terminal periods. Distractors are a comma and "none of these marks." A question mark should not be used as a distractor because the sentence could be interpreted by the student as a question (e.g., Don't play in the street?). An exclamation point is also inappropriate as a distractor because the stimulus could be interpreted as an exclamatory command (e.g., Don't play in the street!).

Whenever none of these marks is used as an answer choice, it should be the correct response for at least one item in the assessment. Item 4 provides such an example. (Moreover, the comma should also be the correct answer for one item; see Skill W4 Mp 4300 for appropriate items.)

Skill: W2 Mp 2000

Skill Statement

Uses question mark to end an interrogative sentence.

Skill Description

Recognizing the need for terminal punctuation, the student uses a question mark to end an interrogative sentence (which may be known to the student as a question or "asking sentence"). Knowledge of the term interrogative is not prerequisite to this skill.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which mark goes in the blank?

1. Is Lucy your friend__

   A. ?
   B. .
   C. no mark

2. Did you find the ball__

   A. ?
   B. .
   C. no mark

3. Where are your shoes__

   A. ?
   B. .
   C. no mark

4. What___ is her name?

   A. ?
   B. .
   C. no mark

Directions: Put in the mark that goes at the end of this sentence.

5. Is Lucy your friend__

Comment: The words mark, blank, and sentence may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

W2 Mp 2000 (continued)

Item Description

In items 1-3, the stimulus is an interrogative sentence with a blank replacing the terminal question mark. Distractors are a period and "no mark." An exclamation mark should not be used as a distractor because it could be an appropriate answer (e.g., Where are your shoes!)

Whenever "no mark" is used as an answer choice, it should be the correct answer for at least one item in the assessment. Item 4 provides such an example.

Item 5 is the constructed-response adaptation of the selected-response items. The student fills in a question mark at the end of an interrogative sentence.

Interrogative sentences used in the assessment are of two types:

(1) questions beginning with an interrogative pronoun or adverb (e.g., who/what; where/how).

(2) questions in which forms of the verb be or other auxiliary verbs appear in the initial position (e.g., Is he your teacher?; Did you finish your homework?).

Skill: W4 Mp 3000

Skill Statement

Uses exclamation point to end an exclamatory sentence.

Skill Description

Recognizing the need for terminal punctuation, the student uses an exclamation point to end an exclamatory sentence (which may be known to the student as a sentence that shows strong feeling).

Comment: Implicit in this skill is the ability to determine the "strong feeling" of a sentence. However, this is usually dependent upon the sentence's oral context. That is, a sentence becomes exclamatory when it is spoken with strong feeling. In writing, the use of the exclamation point is often a matter of subjective judgment, and the student "defines" an exclamatory sentence by punctuating it with an exclamation point (for further discussion of this problem see Skill W4 Lgk 1200: Identifies sentence type: exclamatory).

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which is the best mark to use in the blank?

1. Jan shouted, "The barn is on fire__"

   A. !
   B. ,
   C. ?
   D. .

2. Jeff cried, "Put down that gun__"

   A. !
   B. ,
   C. ?
   D. .

3. Kate's foot slipped, and she yelled, "I'm falling__"

   A. !
   B. ,
   C. ?
   D. .

W4 Mp 3000 (continued)

Directions: Fill in the mark that is best to end this sentence.

4. Jan shouted, "The barn is on fire__"

Comment: The word blank may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The stimulus for these items is an exclamatory sentence (within quotation marks) with a blank replacing the terminal exclamation point. In items 1-3, the student selects the exclamation point from three distractors: (1) a comma; (2) a question mark; (3) a period.

Item 4 is a constructed-response adaptation of the selected-response items. The student fills in an exclamation point at the end of the exclamatory sentence.

Because written exclamatory sentences are so dependent upon the interpretation of the reader, two procedures are used to ensure that the student will recognize the stimuli as exclamatory:

(1) The exclamatory sentence is written as a quotation so that strong emotion can be suggested by the speaker tag (e.g., She yelled; Jan shouted).

(2) The directions specify that the student is to use the mark that is "best," rather than "correct." This reflects more accurately the subjective nature of the task, and students are apt to judge the answer choice more critically.

When exclamatory sentences are used as dialogue, the quotation should be placed at the end of the sentence (e.g., Jeff cried, "Put down that gun!", rather than "Put down that gun!" Jeff cried). This ensures that only the use of terminal punctuation will be assessed, not other skills of dialogue punctuation (see Skill W5 Mp 9000: Uses comma, terminal punctuation, and quotation marks in dialogue quotations).

Skill: W4 Mp 4100

Skill Statement

Uses comma when writing the date.

Skill Description

The student places a comma between the day of the month and the year when writing the date (e.g., October 7, 1980).

Comment: If the date occurs in the middle of a sentence, a comma is also required after the year (e.g., On October 7, 1980, Mary will be ten years old). If the day of the month is not included in the date, a comma follows the month (e.g., October, 1980). However, these two uses of the comma are not commonly taught in elementary textbooks. Therefore, assessment is limited to dates containing a month, day, and year, and the dates are positioned at the end of a sentence.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which mark goes in the blank?

1. Betsy was born on June 10__ 1969.

   A. ,
   B. .
   C. !
   D. none of these marks

2. My family moved here on May 5__ 1972.

   A. ,
   B. .
   C. !
   D. none of these marks

3. The month of June__ is my favorite time of the year.

   A. ,
   B. .
   C. !
   D. none of these marks

Directions: Put a comma in the sentence where it is needed.

4. Betsy was born on June 10 1969.

W4 Mp 4100 (continued)

Comment: The word blank and the names of the months may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

In items 1 and 2, the stimulus is a sentence containing a date. The student selects the comma to insert in the position indicated by the blank. Distractors are (1) a period, (2) an exclamation point, and (3) "none of these marks."

Whenever "none of these marks" is used as an answer choice, it should be the correct response for at least one item in the assessment. Item 3 provides such an example. The stimulus is a sentence containing the name of a month. However, the month is not followed by a day and year. Therefore, no punctuation should be inserted in the blank following the month. Furthermore, items should also be included for which the period and exclamation point are the correct responses. See Skills W2 Mp 1100 and W4 Mp 3000 for appropriate items.

Item 4 is a constructed-response adaptation of the selected-response items. Given a sentence containing a date, the student places a comma between the day of the month and the year.

Skill: W4 Mp 4200

Skill Statement

Uses comma between city and state.

Skill Description

The student places a comma between the name of a city and the state in which it is located (e.g., Los Angeles, California).

Comment: If the names of the city and state occur in the middle of a sentence, a comma is also required after the state (e.g., They moved to Ames, Iowa, last year). However, most elementary textbooks do not teach this use of the comma. Students should be required to use a comma only between the city and state.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which mark goes in the blank?

1. Jan visited her uncle's farm in Cornfield__ Iowa.

   A. ,
   B. .
   C. !
   D. none of these marks

2. Our team will play in Bridgetown__ Vermont.

   A. ,
   B. .
   C. !
   D. none of these marks

3. Mountain View__ is the smallest town in the state.

   A. ,
   B. .
   C. !
   D. none of these marks

Directions: Put a comma in the sentence where it is needed.

4. Jan visited her uncle's farm in Cornfield Iowa.

Comment: The word blank and the names of the states may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level. For further explanations of appropriate state names, see Skill W3 Mc 3000.

W4 Mp 4200 (continued)

Item Description

In items 1 and 2, the stimulus is a sentence containing the name of a city and state. The student selects the comma to insert in the position indicated by the blank. Distractors are (1) a period, (2) an exclamation point, and (3) "none of these marks."

Whenever "none of these marks" is used as an answer choice, it should be the correct response for at least one item in the assessment. Item 3 provides such an example. The stimulus is a sentence containing the name of a city. However, the city is not followed by the name of the state in which it is located. Therefore, no punctuation should be inserted in the blank following the city. Furthermore, items should also be included for which the period and exclamation point are the correct responses. See Skills W2 Mp 1100 and W4 Mp 3000 for appropriate items.

Item 4 is a constructed-response adaptation of the selected-response items. Given a sentence containing the name of a city and a state, the student places a comma between them.

Skill: W4 Mp 4300

Skill Statement

Uses comma to separate items in a series.

Skill Description

The student uses a comma to separate nouns (with their modifiers) in a series (e.g., We had bacon, eggs, and toast for breakfast).

Comment: Adjectives, adverbs, prepositional phrases, verb phrases, and clauses can also be written in a series. However, elementary textbooks commonly teach this skill only with nouns at this grade level.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which mark goes in the blank?

1. In the basket were apples_ cherries, and bananas.

   A. ,
   B. .
   C. !
   D. none of these marks

2. Do you want soup_ milk, or apple pie?

   A. ,
   B. .
   C. !
   D. none of these marks

3. Jean, Eric, Liz, and_ Terry missed the bus.

   A. ,
   B. .
   C. !
   D. none of these marks

Directions: Put a comma in this sentence where it is needed.

4. In the basket were apples cherries, and bananas.

Comment: The word blank may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

W4 Mp 4300 (continued)

Item Description

The stimulus for these items is a declarative or interrogative sentence containing nouns in a series. In items 1 and 2, the student selects the comma to insert in the position indicated by the blank. Distractors are: (1) a period, (2) an exclamation point, and (3) "none of these marks." Whenever "none of these marks" is used as an answer choice, it must be the correct response for some of the items in the assessment. Item 3 provides such an example.

Item 4 is the constructed-response adaptation of the selected-response items. The student places a comma in the sentence to separate the items in the series.

Most authorities agree that a comma should be placed before the conjunction (usually and) preceding the last item in a series. However, this comma is sometimes omitted in printed text. Therefore, all assessment items include the comma before the conjunction in a series. Students are only expected to use commas to separate the other items in the series.

The items in the series can be non-personal nouns (items 1 and 2) or personal proper nouns (item 3). If personal names are used, care should be taken to select names that are clearly first names only, so that the student does not mistake two first names for a first and last name (e.g., Fred__ Henry, and John).

The number of items in the series should be limited to three or four. More than four items makes the stimulus unnecessarily long.

Skill: W5 Mp 4400

Skill Statement

Uses comma with direct address.

Skill Description

The student uses a comma (or commas) to separate a noun of direct address from the rest of the sentence in which it occurs. The position of the comma(s) depends on the position of the noun in the sentence:

(1) A noun of direct address located at the beginning of a sentence requires a comma immediately after it (e.g., Tom, please come with us).

(2) A noun of direct address located in the middle of a sentence requires a comma before and after it (e.g., Do you know, Jan, who broke the window?); however, such constructions are uncommon, and they are not assessed here.

(3) A noun of direct address located at the end of a sentence requires a comma before it (e.g., Watch the traffic, Pete).

Nouns of direct address can be proper nouns, common nouns, or noun phrases (e.g., Anyone who wants ice cream, raise your hand). However, textbook instruction at this level normally covers only single words as nouns of direct address.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which mark goes in the blank?

1. Tom__ please come with us.

   A. ,
   B. .
   C. !
   D. none of these marks

2. Jan__ do you know where my shoes are?

   A. ,
   B. .
   C. !
   D. none of these marks

3. Watch out for the traffic__ children.

   A. ,
   B. .
   C. !
   D. none of these marks

W5 Mp 4400 (continued)

4. Alice__ took the test last week.

A. ,
B. .
C. !
D. none of these marks

Directions: Put a comma in the sentence where it is needed.

5. Tom please come with us.

Item Description

In items 1-3, the stimulus is a sentence containing a noun of direct address. The student selects the comma to insert in the position indicated by the blank. In items 1 and 2, the comma follows the noun at the beginning of the sentence; in item 3, the comma precedes the noun at the end of the sentence.

Distractors are (1) a period, (2) an exclamation point, and (3) "none of these marks." Whenever "none of these marks" is used as an answer choice, it should be the correct response for at least one item in the assessment. Item 4 provides such an example. The stimulus is a sentence with a blank following the subject noun. The noun is clearly not a noun of direct address; therefore, no punctuation should be inserted in the blank. Furthermore, items should also be included for which the period and the exclamation point are the correct responses. See Skills W2 Mp 1100 and W4 Mp 3000 for appropriate items.

Item 5 is a constructed-response adaptation of the selected-response items. Given a sentence containing a noun of direct address, the student places a comma in the appropriate position.

Skill: W4 Mp 5000

Skill Statement

Uses periods at the end of abbreviations and initials.

Skill Description

The student places a period after an abbreviation (e.g., Oct.) and after the initials in a proper name (e.g., T. S. Eliot).

At this level, common abbreviations include (1) personal titles (e.g., Mr.), (2) days of the week (e.g., Fri.), (3) months (e.g., Jan.), and (4) streets (e.g., Main St.). Abbreviations of states are not recommended for assessment because the current two-letter Postal Service abbreviations do not use periods (e.g., CA, TX).

Assessment

Comment: To facilitate assessment, this skill is combined with Skill W4 Mc 6000: Capitalizes initials in names of persons, and abbreviations for days, months, and streets.

Sample Items

Directions: Which line is correct?

1. A. Susan T. Brooks
   B. Susan t. Brooks
   C. Susan T Brooks

2. A. Mr. Frank Brown
   B. mr. Frank Brown
   C. Mr Frank Brown

   Comment: Item 2 also assesses capitalization of personal titles, Skill W3 Mc 5000. Although this skill is assessed at an earlier grade level, it is included here to provide a wider range of distractors.

3. A. Fri., May 10
   B. fri., May 10
   C. Fri, May 10

W4 Mp 5000 (continued)

4. A. Jan. 16, 1979
   B. jan. 16, 1979
   C. Jan 16, 1979

5. A. 141 Main St.
   B. 141 Main st.
   C. 141 Main St

Directions: Write the name correctly.

6. Susan t Brooks

[Susan T. Brooks]

Item Description

In the selected-response item type (items 1-5) the student selects the line that is correctly punctuated and capitalized (choice A's). Item 1 contains an initial, item 2 an abbreviated personal title, item 3 an abbreviated day, item 4 an abbreviated month, and item 5 an abbreviated street. The abbreviations are presented in context (e.g., a date or street address) so that students will recognize them as abbreviations for days, months, and streets. Distractors are of two types:

(1) Choice B's contain an abbreviation/initial that is correctly punctuated but incorrectly capitalized.
(2) Choice C's contain an abbreviation/initial that is correctly capitalized but incorrectly punctuated.

A third distractor type is not recommended. If the abbreviation/initial is both incorrectly capitalized and punctuated (e.g., 141 Main st), it would not be possible to determine whether students who chose this distractor had made an error in capitalization or punctuation. Since two skills are combined in this assessment, the distractors should provide precise diagnostic information.

Item 6 is the constructed-response adaptation of the selected-response items. The student rewrites the line, using proper capitalization and punctuation.

Skill: W3 Mp 6100

Skill Statement

Punctuates greeting and complimentary closing of a personal letter.

Skill Description

The student places a comma after the greeting and the complimentary closing of a personal letter.

Assessment

Comment: Assessment of punctuation is combined here with the related capitalization skill (see Skill W3 Mc 4000) to provide a better range of distractors.

Sample Items

Directions: Which greeting is right for a letter?

1. A. Dear Sam,
   B. Dear Sam
   C. dear Sam,

2. A. Dear Mr. Brown,
   B. Dear Mr. Brown
   C. dear Mr. Brown,

3. A. Dear Ann,
   B. Dear Ann
   C. dear Ann,

Directions: Which closing is right for a letter?

4. A. Your friend,
   B. Your friend
   C. your friend,
   D. Your Friend,

5. A. With love,
   B. With love
   C. with love,
   D. With Love,

6. A. Your teacher,
   B. Your teacher
   C. your teacher,
   D. Your Teacher,

Comment: The word greeting may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

W3 Mp 6100 (continued)

Item Description

The student selects the greeting (items 1-3) or the complimentary closing (items 4-6) that is correctly capitalized and punctuated. The correct responses are choice A's.

The letter greeting consists of Dear and a proper name. The proper name may be a first name, a title followed by a last name, or a first and last name. However, only the capitalization of Dear is assessed here.

The distractors for items 1-3 are designed to provide diagnostic information, and they are of two types:

(1) Choice B is correctly capitalized, but incorrectly punctuated (e.g., Dear Sam).

(2) Choice C is correctly punctuated, but incorrectly capitalized (e.g., dear Sam,).

A third distractor type is not recommended. If the greeting is both incorrectly capitalized and punctuated (e.g., dear Sam), it would not be possible to determine whether students who chose this distractor had made an error in capitalization or punctuation. Since two skills are combined in this assessment, the distractors should provide precise diagnostic information.

The distractors for items 4-6 are also designed to permit diagnosis of student deficiencies. The distractors are of three types:

(1) Distractor B is correctly capitalized, but incorrectly punctuated (e.g., Your friend).

(2) Distractor C is correctly punctuated, but neither word is capitalized (e.g., your friend,).

(3) Distractor D is correctly punctuated, but both words are capitalized (e.g., Your Friend,).

Comment: Names of family relationships (e.g., Your father) should not be used in the complimentary closing because they may be confusing to students. Family relationships are often capitalized when they are used in place of a personal name (e.g., We gave Father a birthday present). However, students at this grade level may not be able to discriminate between the use of capitalized and uncapitalized forms.

Punctuation and capitalization of the greeting and complimentary closing of a personal letter are also assessed by the writing sample for this grade level (see Skill W3 DPpr 6000).

Skill: W5 Mp 6200

Skill Statement

Punctuates greeting and complimentary closing of a business letter.

Skill Description

The student places a colon after the salutation and a comma after the complimentary closing in a business letter.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which greeting is correct for a business letter?

1. A. Dear Sales Manager:
   B. Dear Sales Manager,
   C. Dear Sales Manager.
   D. Dear Sales Manager

2. A. Dear Ms. Green:
   B. Dear Ms. Green,
   C. Dear Ms. Green.
   D. Dear Ms. Green

3. A. Dear Mr. Hill:
   B. Dear Mr. Hill,
   C. Dear Mr. Hill.
   D. Dear Mr. Hill

Directions: Which closing is correct for a business letter?

4. A. Sincerely yours,
   B. Sincerely yours
   C. Sincerely yours.
   D. Sincerely yours:

5. A. Yours truly,
   B. Yours truly
   C. Yours truly.
   D. Yours truly:

6. A. Sincerely,
   B. Sincerely
   C. Sincerely.
   D. Sincerely:

W5 Mp 6200 (continued)

Comment: The word sincerely may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level. However, most textbooks include sincerely as an appropriate closing when teaching the parts of a business letter.

Item Description

In items 1-3, the student selects the greeting that is correctly punctuated with a colon (choice A's). Distractors are a greeting punctuated with a comma (choice B's), a greeting punctuated with a period (choice C's), and a greeting with no punctuation (choice D's). Since the comma is used as a distractor, the directions should emphasize that the greeting is for a business letter, as opposed to a personal letter.

Some greetings should be avoided: To whom it may concern because this greeting does not appear in elementary textbooks; Dear Madam, Dear Sirs, and Gentlemen because of their implicit sexism.

In items 4-6, the student selects the complimentary closing that is correctly punctuated with a comma. Distractors are a closing with no punctuation (choice B's), a closing punctuated with a period (choice C's), and a closing punctuated with a colon (choice D's).

Punctuation of the greeting and complimentary closing of a business letter is also assessed by the writing sample for Grade 6 (see Skill W6 DPpr 7000).

Skill: W4 Mp 7110

Skill Statement

Uses apostrophe in singular possessive forms.

Skill Description

The student uses apostrophes correctly in singular possessive forms. The student must identify the correct position of the apostrophe in the singular possessive (i.e., between the root word and the s; e.g., boy's). Singular possessives may be formed from singular proper or common nouns (e.g., John's/dog's) or from indefinite pronouns (e.g., someone's). However, indefinite pronouns are not included in assessment here because they are not used as commonly as nouns are in textbook instruction at this grade level. Additionally, inanimate nouns are not assessed for possessives since they are less frequent and are not accepted by some authorities (e.g., not the cup's handle but the handle of the cup).

Implicit in this skill is the ability to distinguish between plural forms of nouns and singular possessives. However, students should not be expected to distinguish between singular and plural possessives at this grade level.

Knowledge of the technical terms apostrophe and singular possessive is not prerequisite to this skill.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which word is right?

1. _____ uncle is a sea captain.

   A. Dick's
   B. Dicks
   C. Dic'ks

2. Tony wants to clean his _____ cage.

   A. bird's
   B. birds
   C. bir'ds

3. All the _____ went down the stairs.

   A. girl's
   B. girls
   C. gir'ls

W4 Mp 7110 (continued)

Directions: Fill in the blank with the correct form of the underlined word. The form shows ownership.

4. Betsy has a bicycle.

   _____ bicycle is red.

5. The bird has a nest.

   The _____ nest is in a tree.

6. My brother has a kitten.

   My _____ kitten drinks milk.

Comment: The word blank may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level.

Item Description

The stimulus for the selected-response item type (items 1-3) is a sentence with a blank replacing a missing word. In items 1 and 2, the student selects the singular possessive form (choice A's) to fill in the blank. Distractors are forms with no apostrophe (choice B's) and forms in which the apostrophe precedes, by one letter, its correct position in the word (choice C's).

Item 3 is a distractor item for which the plural noun (choice B) is the correct response. Distractor items should be included in the assessment to give the student the opportunity to make discriminating responses.

The stimulus for the constructed-response item type (items 4-6) is a sentence with an underlined word. This word is to be used in forming the singular possessive. The student fills in the blank in the second sentence with the correct form.

Singular possessives selected for assessment can be proper or common nouns. However, proper nouns ending in s (e.g., James/Charles) should be avoided because there are two acceptable possessive forms (e.g., James's or James').

Skill: W5 Mp 7120

Skill Statement

Uses apostrophe in plural possessive forms.

Skill Description

The student uses apostrophes correctly in plural possessive forms. Concomitantly, the student must identify the correct position of the apostrophe in the plural possessive. The correct position of the apostrophe in regular plural possessives is after the s plural marker (e.g., boys-boys'). The correct form for irregular plural nouns not ending with s is 's (e.g., children-children's). The student must also be able to distinguish between singular and plural possessives and between possessives and plural forms of nouns.

Knowledge of the technical terms apostrophe and plural possessive is not prerequisite to this skill.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which word is correct?

1. The _____ names are Betsy and Jill.

   A. sisters'
   B. sisters
   C. sister's

2. The _____ uniforms arrived yesterday.

   A. children's
   B. childrens
   C. childrens'

3. Bill has a kitten. The _____ fur needs combing.

   A. kitten's
   B. kittens
   C. kittens'

4. The _____ ate all the peanuts.

   A. elephants
   B. elephant's
   C. elephants'

W5 Mp 7120 (continued)

Directions: Fill in the blank with the correct form of the underlined word. The form shows ownership.

5. The children have books that are new.

   The _____ books are new.

6. Both brothers have big houses.

   The _____ houses are also old.

7. The dogs like to play games.

   The _____ games are noisy.

Item Description

The stimulus for the selected-response item type (items 1-4) is a sentence with a blank replacing a missing word. The student selects the correct form of a word to fill the blank. In items 1 and 2, the student selects the correct plural possessive form (choice A's). Distractors are forms with no apostrophe (choice B's) and forms in which the apostrophe is misplaced in relation to the s (choice C's).

Items 3 and 4 are distractor items, designed to allow the student to make more discriminating answer selections. The correct response for item 3 is the singular possessive form (choice A); the correct response for item 4 is the simple plural form (choice _).

The stimulus for the constructed-response item type (items 5-7) is a sentence with an underlined word. This word is to be used in forming the plural possessive. The student fills in the blank with the correct form of the word that belongs in the second sentence.

Plural possessives selected for assessment can be plural nouns ending in s (e.g., girls') and plural nouns not ending in s (e.g., children's, women's, men's).

Providing sufficient sentence context is particularly important when the student is asked to distinguish among plural possessives, plural nouns, and singular possessives. For example, the first sentence below does not have enough information to make this distinction possible, but the second sentence does:

1. This is my sister's/sisters' room.

2. This is my two sister's/sisters' room.

Skill: W5 Mp 7200

Skill Statement

Uses apostrophe in contractions.

Skill Description

The student uses an apostrophe in place of the deleted letter (or letters) in a contraction. Implicit in this skill is the ability to recognize contractions and the complete words from which the contractions are formed.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Which word goes in the blank?

1. They _____ know how to swim.

   A. don't
   B. dont'
   C. dont
   D. do'nt

2. He _____ strong enough to open the door.

   A. wasn't
   B. wasnt'
   C. wasnt
   D. was'nt

3. _____ going to buy a new dress.

   A. She's
   B. Shes'
   C. Shes
   D. Sh'es

4. Paul found a pretty _____ on the beach.

   A. she'll
   B. shell'
   C. shell
   D. sh'ell

W5 Mp 7200 (continued)

Directions: The underlined words in this sentence can be written as a contraction. Write the contraction on the line below the sentence.

5. They do not know how to swim.

[don't]

Item Description

The stimulus for the selected-response items (1-3) is a sentence with a blank replacing a contraction. The student selects the correctly punctuated contraction (choice A's) to fill the blank in the sentence. Distractors are forms in which the apostrophe follows the contraction (choice B's), forms without an apostrophe (choice C's), and forms in which the apostrophe precedes, by one letter, its correct position in the contraction (choice D's).

Item 4 is a distractor item in which the correct response (choice C) does not contain an apostrophe. Distractor items are designed to allow the student to make a more discriminating choice in answer selection. Correct responses for distractor items should be words that can be legitimate contractions when they are punctuated with an apostrophe (e.g., shell-she'll; III-I'll; its-it's). However, the sentence context should clearly establish that the contraction is not the appropriate response.

Item 5 is a constructed-response adaptation of the selected-response items. The student writes the contraction for the underlined words in the sentence.

The following contractions are acceptable for assessment at this grade level: couldn't, don't, he's, here's, how's, I'll, it's, I've, she'll, she's, shouldn't, that's, they've, wasn't, we'd, we've, what's, where's, won't, you'll, you're. Two-letter contractions (e.g., I'm) can be used, but distractors for selected-response items are limited to two.

Skill: W5 Mp 8000

Skill Statement

Uses comma, terminal punctuation, and quotation marks in dialogue quotations.

Skill Description

The student correctly punctuates dialogue quotations. Implicit in this skill is the ability to understand the concept of dialogue and to recognize quotation marks as indicators of dialogue. The use of terminal punctuation for declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences is also prerequisite to this skill (see Skills W2 Mp 1100, 2000 and W4 Mp 1200, 3000). When punctuating dialogue quotations, the student applies the following rules:

1. Quotation marks are used to enclose the words of the speaker and the terminal punctuation in a dialogue quotation; e.g.:

   "How are you?" I asked.
   He replied, "I am fine."

2. Indirect quotations are not enclosed by quotation marks; e.g.:

   Mother said that we could watch television.
   Bill asked if there were any tickets left for the game.

3. A comma is used to separate the speaker tag from the quotation when the tag precedes the quotation; e.g.:

   Paul said, "I'm not hungry now."
   She asked, "Are we leaving today?"

4. If the quotation is a declarative or imperative sentence and the speaker tag follows the quotation, a comma replaces the terminal period in the quotation; e.g.:

   "There is a man at the door," Rose said.
   "Give me one more chance," he said.

5. When the speaker tag occurs at the end of a sentence, it is followed by a period; e.g.:

   "Why are you laughing?" Father asked.
   "We visited the Grand Canyon," Ruth said.

Comment: Punctuation of interrupted dialogue (e.g., "I'm thirsty," he said, "but I will continue working.") is not included in assessment at the elementary level.

W5 Mp 8000 (continued)

Assessment

Sample Items

Comment: Four answer choices are listed for the selected-response items below to illustrate the range of available distractors. However, no more than three choices should be used in the actual assessment instrument because these items may become visually confusing with a larger number of distractors.

Directions: Which sentence is correct?

1. A. Dan said, "We are tired."
   B. Dan said "We are tired."
   C. Dan said, "We are tired".
   D. Dan said, "We are tired"

2. A. "I lost my jacket," the girl said.
   B. "I lost my jacket." the girl said.
   C. "I lost my jacket", the girl said.
   D. "I lost my jacket," the girl said

3. A. Father asked, "Where are you going?"
   B. Father asked "Where are you going?"
   C. Father asked, "Where are you going"?
   D. Father asked, "Where are you going."

4. A. "What is your favorite holiday?" she asked.
   B. "What is your favorite holiday," she asked.
   C. "What is your favorite holiday"? she asked.
   D. What is your favorite holiday? she asked.

5. A. Bill shouted, "The tree is falling!"
   B. Bill shouted "The tree is falling!"
   C. Bill shouted, "The tree is falling"!
   D. Bill shouted! "The tree is falling."

6. A. "We're lost!" Ann cried.
   B. "We're lost!", Ann cried.
   C. "We're lost," Ann cried!
   D. We're lost! Ann cried.

7. A. Grandmother asked if we were hungry.
   B. Grandmother asked if, "We were hungry?"
   C. Grandmother asked if, "We were hungry."
   D. Grandmother asked if, "We were hungry"?

W5 Mp 8000 (continued)

Directions: Put in all the punctuation marks that are needed in these sentences.

8. We are tired he said

9. Grandmother asked if we were hungry

Item Description

For the selected-response item type (items 1-7), the student selects the sentence that is correctly punctuated (all choice A's). These items are explained in detail below.

Item 1 contains a declarative sentence in the dialogue quotation, preceded by the speaker tag. Distractors are of three types:

(1) Choice B omits the comma between the speaker tag and the quotation (see rule 3 in the Skill Description above).

(2) Choice C places the terminal period outside the quotation marks (see rule 1).

(3) Choice D omits the terminal period in the quotation (see rule 1).

Item 2 contains a declarative sentence in the dialogue quotation, followed by the speaker tag. Distractors are of three types:

(1) Choice B incorrectly places a period at the end of the quotation (see rule 4).

(2) Choice C places the comma outside the quotation marks, between the quotation and the speaker tag (see rules 1 and 4).

(3) Choice D omits the terminal period after the speaker tag (see rule 5).

Item 3 contains an interrogative sentence in the dialogue quotation, preceded by the speaker tag. Distractors are of three types:

(1) Choice B omits the comma between the speaker tag and the quotation (see rule 3).

(2) Choice C places the terminal question mark outside the quotation marks (see rule 1).

(3) Choice D incorrectly uses a period as the terminal punctuation of the quotation (see rule 1).

W5 Mp 8000 (continued)

Item 4 contains an interrogative sentence in the dialogue quotation, followed by the speaker tag. Distractors are of three types:

(1) Choice B incorrectly replaces the terminal question mark of the quotation with a comma (see rules 1 and 4).

(2) Choice C places the terminal question mark outside the quotation marks (see rule 1).

(3) Choice D omits the quotation marks (see rule 1).

Item 5 contains an exclamatory sentence in the dialogue quotation, preceded by the speaker tag. Distractors are of three types:

(1) Choice B omits the comma between the speaker tag and the quotation (see rule 3).

(2) Choice C places the terminal exclamation point outside the quotation marks (see rule 1).

(3) Choice D incorrectly places the exclamation point after the speaker tag (see rule 3).

Item 6 contains an exclamatory sentence in the dialogue quotation, followed by the speaker tag. Distractors are of three types:

(1) Choice B incorrectly places a comma between the quotation and the speaker tag (see rules 1 and 4).

(2) Choice C substitutes a comma for the exclamation point within the quotation and places the exclamation point after the speaker tag (see rules 1 and 5).

(3) Choice D omits the quotation marks (see rule 1).

Item 7 contains an indirect quotation that requires no quotation marks. All distractors use quotation marks combined with different forms and positions of terminal punctuation.

Comment: The selected-response items do not include examples of imperative sentences. However, imperative quotations are punctuated the same as declarative quotations. Therefore, quotations containing imperative sentences can use the same distractor types developed for items 1 and 2 above.

W5 Mp 8000 (continued)

Almost any combination of misplaced or omitted punctuation can be used in designing distractors for these items. However, the distractors outlined above should provide an adequate range of difficulty for assessing this skill.

Items 8 and 9 provide examples of constructed-response items for assessing this skill. The student inserts the necessary punctuation in the dialogue quotation in item 8. In item 9, the student must recognize that the sentence is an indirect quotation, and that the only punctuation that is required is the terminal period. Constructed-response items should place the speaker tag after the quotation so that capitalization does not provide an inappropriate clue to the beginning of the quotation (e.g., He said We are tired).

The constructed-response item type is much more difficult than the selected-response item. Thus it measures greater mastery of the skill. However, constructed-response items are also more difficult to score because there are so many possible correct responses and possible errors. Therefore, scoring of these items should provide for partially correct answers.

Skill: W2 Mfs 1000

Skill Statement

Indents first word of a paragraph.

Skill Description

The student indents the first word of the first sentence in a paragraph. Thus the first word begins a few spaces to the right of subsequent lines in the paragraph (i.e., to the right of the margin; see Skill W2 Mfs 2000: Uses margins).

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by the writing sample for this grade level, which is described for Skill W2 DPpr 2000. See those specifications for the sample item and the item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion.

Skill: W2 Mfs 2000

Skill Statement

Uses margins.

Skill Description

The student uses a discernible margin in writing. Although some textbooks specify exact measures for margins, an obvious and relatively consistent space at the edges of the paper comprises the constraints of this skill.

Assessment

Comment: This skill is assessed by the writing sample for this grade level, which is described for Skill W2 DPpr 2000. See those specifications for the sample item and the item description. See the scoring key and scoring guide for that sample to relate this skill to the concomitantly evaluated criterion.

Skill: W3 Mfs 3000

Skill Statement

Fills in blanks of forms with personal information (e.g., name, birthday): heading of a standardized test.

Skill Description

The student correctly completes the heading of a standardized test. These tests usually require students to print personal information in an appropriate space and then code that information in a machine-readable format. This is usually done by filling in a circle or rectangle corresponding to a specific letter or numeral.

This skill might also be classified as a reading or listening skill because it is so dependent on the student's ability to follow written and/or oral directions. However, since the skill does call for the production of written information, it is included here.

Assessment

Comment: This skill can be informally assessed by teachers when standardized tests are administered to students. Sample items are not included here because the format of test headings varies according to the specific test being used, so it is not feasible to include all possible formats here. In addition, an assessment task using a sample test heading would be so artifically contrived that it would be of little value.

Skill: W3 Mfs 4100

Skill Statement

Includes the parts of a personal letter.

Skill Description

In composing personal letters, the student includes the following letter parts with the appropriate information:

(1) The heading contains the month, day, and year in which the letter is written. (Punctuation for the date is not required until fourth grade.) In some personal letters, the sender's address is also included in the heading.

(2) The greeting consists of Dear and the first name of the person to whom the letter is being sent. If the letter is written to a member of the writer's family, the appropriate title is used (e.g., Dear Grandmother).

(3) The complimentary closing of a personal letter usually consists of Your friend, Love, or Your son (or other appropriate relationship).

(4) The signature is the sender's handwritten name. In a personal letter, the sender's first name is usually sufficient.

Knowledge of the technical names for letter parts (e.g., complimentary closing) is not prerequisite to this skill.

Assessment

Comment: To facilitate assessment, this skill is combined with Skill W3 Mfs 5100: Places personal letter parts correctly. Personal letter parts are also assessed by one of the writing samples for Grade 3 (see Skill W3 DPpr 6000).

Skill: W5 Mfs 4200

Skill Statement

Includes the parts of a business letter.

Skill Description

In composing business letters, the student includes the following letter parts with the appropriate information:

(1) The heading includes the sender's address and the month, day, and year that the letter is written.

(2) The inside address is the address of the person and/or company to whom the letter is being sent.

(3) The greeting may consist of Dear and the last name (with appropriate title) of the person to whom the letter is written (e.g., Dear Ms. Jones). If the name of the person is not known, the salutation is less specific (e.g., Dear Sales Manager).

(4) The complimentaty closing of a business letter usually consists of Sincerely, Sincerely yours, or Yours truly. The complimentary closing is generally more formal than that of a personal letter.

(5) The signature is the sender's handwritten name. The sender's name is often typewritten or printed directly below the handwritten name. However, students at this grade level are usually not required to type.

Assessment

Comment: To facilitate assessment, this skill is combined with Skill W5 Mfs 5200: Places business letter parts correctly. Business letter parts are also assessed in one of the writing samples for Grade 6 (see Skill W6 DPpr 7000).

Skill: W3 Mfs 5100

Skill Statement

Places personal letter parts correctly.

Skill Description

The student places the heading, greeting, complimentary closing, and signature in the correct space in a personal letter. The heading includes the month, day, and year in which the letter was written, and it is placed at the top right-hand corner of the letter. The heading may also include the return address. The greeting includes Dear and the addressee's name followed by a comma. It is located several lines below the date, at the left margin. The complimentary closing for the personal letter is found several lines under the body of the letter in the lower right corner, aligned with the date. The complimentary closing generally reads Your friend, Love, or With love. The signature is the sender's name, and it is located two lines directly under the complimentary closing. The student is expected to identify the location of each of these letter parts. Knowledge of the technical names for letter parts is not prerequisite to this skill.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Look at this letter. It has some missing parts.

_____ 1

_____ 2

Thank you for giving me the book for my birthday. It is one of the best books I have ever read.

_____ 3

_____ 4

These are the missing parts:

A. Dear Jim,
B. April 3, 1979
C. Linda
D. Your friend,

W3 Mfs 5100 (continued)

1. Which part goes on line 1?

   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.

2. Which part goes on line 2?

   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.

3. Which part goes on line 3?

   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.

4. Which part goes on line 4?

   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.

Item Description

The stimulus consists of (1) the body of a letter with blank lines inserted for other letter parts and (2) a list consisting of the heading, greeting, complimentary closing, and signature of a letter. The student identifies where each letter part belongs.

Distractors are the letter parts described above. The item choices are the same for all four items. Since each choice can be the correct answer for one item and a distractor for three others, no extra distractors should be added.

The distractors should be ordered the same in each item because changing the order of the distractors is confusing and serves no useful purpose.

Skill: W5 Mfs 5200

Skill Statement

Places business letter parts correctly.

Skill Description

The student places the heading, inside address, greeting, complimentary closing, and signature in the correct space in a business letter. The heading includes the sender's address and the month, day, and year in which the letter is written. The heading is located in the upper right-hand corner of the letter. The inside address is the address of the person and/or institution to whom the letter is being sent. It is placed at the left margin, several lines below the date on the right. The greeting of the business letter is followed by a colon, and it is located two lines below the inside address. The complimentary closing of the business letter is found several lines under the body of the letter, aligned with the date. The signature is the sender's handwritten name, and it is located two lines below the complimentary closing.

Knowledge of the technical names for business letter parts is not prerequisite to this skill.

Comment: To facilitate assessment, this skill is combined with Skill W5 Mfs 4200: Includes the parts of a business letter.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Look at the business letter. It has some missing parts.

_____1_____

_____2_____

_____3_____

In my sixth grade class, I am doing a report on early railroads in this country. I understand that you send free information about steam-powered railroad engines. Would you please send me the information you have?

Thank you very much.

_____4_____

_____5_____

W5 Mfs 5200 (continued)

Here are the missing letter parts:

A. Jill Summers

B. Ms. Kate Hill
Lonestar Museum
738 West Mill Street
Forest Town, Ohio

C. Sincerely yours,

D. Dear Ms. Hill:

E. 1651 Stone Road
Beach City, Florida
May 18, 1979

1. Which letter part goes in space 1?

A.
B.
C.
D.
E.

2. Which letter part goes in space 2?

A.
B.
C.
D.
E.

3. Which letter part goes in space 3?

A.
B.
C.
D.
E.

4. Which letter part goes in space 4?

A.
B.
C.
D.
E.

W5 Mfs 5200 (continued)

5. Which letter part goes in space 5?

A.
B.
C.
D.
E.

Comment: The word sincerely may not be in students' reading vocabularies at this grade level. However, most textbooks use sincerely when teaching the composition of business letters.

Item Description

The stimulus consists of (1) body of a letter with blank lines replacing the other letter parts and (2) a list consisting of the heading, inside address, greeting, complimentary closing, and signature of a business letter. The student identifies where each letter part belongs by selecting the letter of the part that fits in the blank.

Distractors are the letter parts described above. The item choices are the same for all five items. Since each choice can be the correct answer for one item and a distractor for four others, no other distractors should be added. The distractors should be ordered the same in each item because changing the order is confusing and serves no useful purpose.

This skill is also assessed by the writing sample for Grade 6 (see Skill W6 DPpr 7000).

Skill: W3 Mfs 6000

Skill Statement

Includes all elements of address and return address on an envelope.

Skill Description

When preparing correspondence for mailing, the student includes the following information on the envelope: name, street address, city, state, zip code.

Assessment

Comment: To facilitate assessment, this skill is combined with Skill W3 Mfs 7000: Places address and return address in the correct space on an envelope.

Skill: W3 Mfs 7000

Skill Statement

Places address and return address in the correct space on an envelope.

Skill Description

The student places the address and return address (name, street address, city) on an envelope correctly. The student must know the order of the address parts (name followed by street address, then by city/state/zip code) and the location of each part.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Look at this envelope. It has some missing parts.

Miss Sue Henry

____1____

River City, CA 90056

____2____

1134 Red Mountain Drive

____3____, MO __4__

Here are the missing parts:

A. Miss Judy White
B. Forest City
C. 116 Oak Road
D. 64100

1. Which part goes on line 1?

A.
B.
C.
D.

2. Which part goes on line 2?

A.
B.
C.
D.

W3 Mfs 7000 (continued)

3. Which part goes on line 3?

   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.

4. Which part goes on line 4?

   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.

Item Description

The stimulus for the sample items consists of (1) an envelope with blank lines where address elements belong and (2) a list of address parts--a name, a street address, a state, and a zip code; missing on the envelope is the street address of the return address, and the name, city and zip code of the address. For additional stimuli, other arrangements of missing parts are possible. The student identifies where each address part belongs on the envelope.

All distractors are the address parts described above. The item choices are the same for all four items. Since each choice can be the correct answer for one item and a distractor for three others, no extra distractors should be added.

Distractors should be ordered the same in each item because changing the order of the distractors is confusing and serves no useful purpose.

Skill: W5 Mfs 8000

Skill Statement

Uses dialogue for only one speaker in a paragraph.

Skill Description

When writing a conversation containing dialogue quotations, the student begins a new paragraph for each speaker. The student must be able to recognize dialogue quotations and distinguish between the speakers in the conversation. Prerequisite to this skill is the ability to indent the first word of a paragraph (see Skill W2 Mfs 1000). Knowledge of the technical term dialogue is not implicit in this skill.

Assessment

Sample Items

Directions: Remember the rules you have learned about using paragraphs in conversations. Read each story part. Where should a new paragraph begin?

1. The bus returned to school in the afternoon. (A) Pete and Ann got off and walked toward the classroom. (B) "Did you enjoy the trip to the zoo?" Pete asked. (C) "I sure did," Ann replied. (D) "My favorite part was the monkey house because some of those monkeys act just like people," she said.

   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.

2. Jack and Gwen stood on the porch of the old house. (A) "They say it's haunted," Jack whispered. (B) "I don't believe those stories," Gwen said. (C) "That's just kid stuff," she said. (D) Then she walked up to the door and turned the knob.

   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.

3. "I think we're lost," Rose said to Dave. (A) "I guess you're right," Dave sighed, "and it will be dark soon." (B) He looked at the deep forest around them. (C) Then he told Rose that they should never have left the trail. (D) She agreed that they had made a big mistake.

W5 Mfs 8000 (continued)

A.
B.
C.
D.

Directions: Remember the rules you have learned about using paragraphs in conversations. Draw a circle around the word that should begin each new paragraph.

4. "Did you enjoy the trip to the zoo?" Pete asked. "I sure did," Ann replied. "My favorite part was the monkey house," she said, "because some of those monkeys act just like people." Pete laughed and said, "They sure are funny animals.

Item Description

The stimulus for these items is a conversation between two speakers. The speakers are identified by name (one male and one female) so that students can clearly distinguish between them. Moreover, each quotation is marked with a speaker tag. In items 1-3, the student identifies the point where a new paragraph should begin (i.e., the sentence in which the dialogue shifts from the words of speaker 1 to the words of speaker 2). The position of the correct response is varied in each item so that the answer position does not provide an inappropriate clue to the correct response. The correct answers for each item are (1) C, (2) B, and (3) A.

Distractors are of three basic types. The first type is a non-dialogue sentence that advances the narration of events (e.g., sentence A in item 1). The second type is a dialogue quotation containing additional words of speaker 2 (e.g., sentence D in item 1). The third distractor type is a paraphrase of the words of one speaker (e.g., sentence C in item 3).

Item 4 is a constructed-response adaptation of the selected-response items. The student circles the two words that should begin new paragraphs. The directions for the item specify that paragraphing is the focus of the assessment task, rather than punctuation and capitalization skills.

The stimulus for item 4 is a revised adaptation of item 1. The conversation has been edited to remove non-dialogue sentences, which might be confusing in a constructed-response assessment (e.g., The bus returned to school in the afternoon).

The constructed-response item type is more difficult than the selected-response items because the student is required to distinguish three separate paragraphs. That is, the words of speaker 1 are contained in the first and third paragraphs, and the words of speaker 2 are contained in the second paragraph. Thus the constructed-response item type measures greater mastery of the skill.

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